Introduced by Senator Mountjoy

February 28, 1997

An act to amend Section 2982 of the Civil Code, and to amend Sections 14602.6 and 22850.5 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1325, as introduced, Mountjoy. Vehicles.

(1) Existing law requires specified conditional sale contracts for the sale of motor vehicles to contain specified disclosures and limits the amount of the disclosed finance charges. However, existing law provides that the limits do not apply to contracts in which the finance charge or a portion thereof is determined by the simple-interest basis and the amount financed, as specified, is more than \$1,650.

This bill would increase the exempted amount from more than \$1,650 to more than \$2,500.

(2) Under existing law, a vehicle that is removed and seized, because a peace officer has determined that the driver's privilege to operate the vehicle was suspended or revoked or the driver was never issued a license, is required to be released to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent when, among other things, the legal owner or the agent presents an affidavit of repossession for the vehicle.

This bill would include an affidavit of nonmonetary repossession in the list of documents that are to be presented in order to obtain the release of the vehicle and would provide that a seizure pursuant to the above is sufficient grounds for

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the issuance of an affidavit of nonmonetary repossession for the vehicle.

(3) Existing law authorizes state and local agencies to adopt a regulation, ordinance, or resolution establishing procedures for the release of properly impounded vehicles and for the imposition of a charge equal to the administrative costs relating to the removal, impoundment, storage, or release of the vehicles subject to waiver.

This bill would limit the administrative costs to \$15.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 2982 of the Civil Code is 2 amended to read:
- 3 2982. Every conditional sale contract subject to this 4 chapter shall contain the disclosures required by
- 5 Regulation Z whether or not Regulation Z applies to the
- 6 transaction. In addition, to the extent applicable, the
- 7 contract shall contain the other disclosures and notices
- 8 required by, and shall satisfy the requirements and
- 9 limitations of, this section. The disclosures required by
- 10 subdivision (a) may be itemized or subtotaled to a greater
- 11 extent than as required by that subdivision and shall be
- 12 made together and in the sequence set forth in that
- 13 subdivision. All other disclosures and notices may appear
- 14 in the contract in any location or sequence and may be
- 15 combined or interspersed with other provisions of the 16 contract.
- 17 (a) The contract shall contain following the 18 disclosures. applicable. which shall labeled as be 19 "itemization of the amount financed":
- 20 (1) (A) The cash price, exclusive of document 21 preparation fees, taxes imposed on the sale, pollution
- 22 control certification fees, and the amount charged for a
- 23 service contract.
- 24 (B) The fee to be retained by the seller for document 25 preparation.

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(C) The fee charged by the seller for certifying that the motor vehicle complies with applicable pollution control requirements.

- (D) Any donation made to a high polluter repair or removal program.
 - (E) Taxes imposed on the sale.

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- (F) The amount charged for a service contract.
- (G) The total cash price, which is the sum of subparagraphs (A) to (F), inclusive.
- (2) An itemization of the amounts to be paid to any public officer for license, certificate of title, motor vehicle smog impact fee, and registration.
- (3) The aggregate amount of premiums agreed, upon 14 execution of the contract, to be paid for policies of 15 insurance included in the contract, excluding the amount 16 of any insurance premium included in the finance charge.
- (4) The amount of the state fee for issuance of a 18 certificate of compliance, noncompliance, exemption, or applicable pollution control waiver pursuant to any statute.
- (5) A subtotal representing the sum of the foregoing 22 items.
 - (6) The amount of the buyer's downpayment itemized to show the following:
 - (A) The net agreed value of the property being traded in.
- (B) The amount of any portion of the downpayment 28 to be deferred until not later than the due date of the regularly scheduled installment contract and which is not subject to a finance charge.
 - (C) The amount of any manufacturer's rebate applied or to be applied to the downpayment.
- (D) The remaining amount paid or to be paid by the 34 buyer as a downpayment.
- (7) The amount of any administrative finance charge, 36 labeled "prepaid finance charge."
- (8) The difference between item (5) and the sum of 37 items (6) and (7), labeled "amount financed."

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(b) No particular terminology is required to disclose the items set forth in subdivision (a) except as expressly provided in that subdivision.

- (c) If payment of all or a portion of the downpayment is to be deferred, the deferred payment shall be reflected in the payment schedule disclosed pursuant to Regulation Z.
- the downpayment includes property traded in, the contract shall contain a brief description of that property.
- (e) The contract shall contain the names and addresses of all persons to whom the notice required under Section 2983.2 and permitted under Sections 2983.5 and 2984 is to be sent.
- (f) (1) Where the contract includes a finance charge 16 determined on the precomputed basis, the contract shall identify the method of computing the unearned portion 18 of the finance charge in the event of prepayment in full of the buyer's obligation and contain a statement of the amount or method of computation of any charge that may be deducted from the amount of any unearned finance charge in computing the amount that will be credited to the obligation or refunded to the buyer. The method of computing the unearned portion of the finance charge 25 shall be sufficiently identified with a reference to the actuarial method if the computation will be under that method. The method of computing the unearned portion of the finance charge shall be sufficiently identified with a reference to the Rule of 78's, the sum of the digits, or the sum of the periodic time balances method in all other cases, and those references shall be deemed to be equivalent for disclosure purposes.
- (2) Where the contract includes a finance charge 34 which is determined on the simple-interest basis but provides for a minimum finance charge in the event of prepayment in full, the contract shall contain a statement of that fact and the amount of the minimum finance charge or its method of calculation.
- 39 (g) (1) Where the contract includes a finance charge which is determined on the precomputed basis

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provides that the unearned portion of the finance charge to be refunded upon full prepayment of the contract is to be determined by a method other than actuarial, the contract shall contain a notice, in at least 10-point 5 boldface type if the contract is printed, reading as follows: "Notice to buyer: (1) Do not sign this agreement before you read it or if it contains any blank spaces to be filled in. (2) You are entitled to a completely filled-in copy of this agreement. (3) You can prepay the full amount due under this agreement at any time and obtain a partial refund of the finance charge if it is \$1 or more. Because of the way the amount of this refund will be figured, the 12 time when you prepay could increase the ultimate cost of credit under this agreement. (4) If you default in the performance of your obligations under this agreement, 15 the vehicle may be repossessed and you may be subject 16 17 liability for the unpaid indebtedness suit and 18 evidenced by this agreement." 19

(2) Where the contract includes a finance charge which is determined on the precomputed basis provides for the actuarial method for computing the unearned portion of the finance charge prepayment in full, the contract shall contain a notice, in at least 10-point boldface type if the contract is printed, reading as follows: "Notice to buyer: (1) Do not sign this agreement before you read it or if it contains any blank spaces to be filled in. (2) You are entitled to a completely 28 filled-in copy of this agreement. (3) You can prepay the full amount due under this agreement at any time and obtain a partial refund of the finance charge if it is \$1 or more. (4) If you default in the performance of your obligations under this agreement, the vehicle may be repossessed and you may be subject to suit and liability for the unpaid indebtedness evidenced by this agreement."

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(3) Where the contract includes a finance charge 36 which is determined on the simple-interest basis, the contract shall contain a notice, in at least 10-point boldface type if the contract is printed, reading as follows: "Notice to buyer: (1) Do not sign this agreement before you read it or if it contains any blank spaces to be filled SB 1325 -6-

in. (2) You are entitled to a completely filled-in copy of this agreement. (3) You can prepay the full amount due under this agreement at any time. (4) If you default in the performance of your obligations under this agreement, the vehicle may be repossessed and you may be subject and liability for the unpaid indebtedness evidenced by this agreement."

(h) The contract shall contain a notice in at least 8-point boldface type, acknowledged by the buyer, that 10 reads as follows:

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"If you have a complaint concerning this sale, you should try to resolve it with the seller.

Complaints concerning unfair or deceptive practices 15 or methods by the seller may be referred to the city 16 attorney, the district attorney, or the Department of 17 Motor Vehicles, Division of Investigations and 18 Occupational Licensing, P.O. Box 93289. Sacramento. 19 California 94232-3890, or any combination thereof.

After this contract is signed, the seller may not change 21 the financing or payment terms unless you agree in writing to the change. You do not have to agree to any change, and it is an unfair or deceptive practice for the seller to make a unilateral change.

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Buyer's Signature"

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- (i) (1) The contract shall contain an itemization of any insurance included as part of the amount financed disclosed pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) and of any insurance included as part of the finance charge. The itemization shall identify the type 34 insurance coverage and the premium charged therefor, and, if the insurance expires before the date of the last 36 scheduled installment included in the repayment schedule, the term of the insurance shall be stated.
 - (2) If any charge for insurance (other than for credit life or disability) is included in the contract balance and disbursement of any part thereof is to be made more than

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one year after the date of the conditional sale contract, any finance charge on the amount to be disbursed after one year shall be computed from the month the disbursement is to be made to the due date of the last 5 installment under the conditional sale contract.

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- (j) (1) Except for contracts in which the finance charge or portion thereof is determined by the simple interest basis and the amount financed disclosed pursuant to paragraph (8) of subdivision (a) is more than—one 10 thousand six hundred fifty dollars (\$1,650) two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500), the dollar amount of the disclosed finance charge shall not exceed the greater of:
- (A) (i) One and one-half percent on so much of the 14 unpaid balance as does not exceed two hundred 15 twenty-five dollars (\$225), $1^{1}/_{6}$ percent on so much of the 16 unpaid balance in excess of two hundred twenty-five dollars (\$225) as does not exceed nine hundred dollars 18 (\$900) and $\frac{5}{6}$ of 1 percent on so much of the unpaid balance in excess of nine hundred dollars (\$900) as does not exceed one thousand six hundred fifty dollars (\$1,650) two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500); or
- (ii) One percent of the entire unpaid balance; 23 multiplied in either case by the number of months (computed on the basis of a full month for any fractional month period in excess of 15 days) elapsing between the date of the contract and the due date of the last installment; or
 - (B) If the finance charge is determined by the precomputed basis, twenty-five dollars (\$25); or
 - (C) If the finance charge or a portion thereof is determined by the simple-interest basis:
- (i) Twenty-five dollars (\$25) if the unpaid balance does not exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000), (ii) fifty 34 dollars (\$50) if the unpaid balance exceeds one thousand 35 dollars (\$1,000) but does not exceed two thousand dollars 36 (\$2,000), or (iii) seventy-five dollars (\$75) if the unpaid balance exceeds two thousand dollars (\$2,000).
- 38 (2) The holder of the contract shall not charge, collect, or receive a finance charge which exceeds the disclosed finance charge, except to the extent (A) caused by the

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holder's receipt of one or more payments under a contract which provides for determination of the finance charge or a portion thereof on the 365-day basis at a time or times other than as originally scheduled whether or not 5 the parties enter into an agreement pursuant to Section 2982.3, (B) permitted by paragraph (2), (3), or (4) of subdivision (c) of Section 226.17 of Regulation Z, or (C) permitted by subdivisions (a) and (c) of Section 2982.8.

- (3) If the finance charge or a portion thereof is 10 determined by the simple-interest basis and the amount of the unpaid balance exceeds five thousand dollars 12 (\$5,000), the holder of the contract may, in lieu of its right to a minimum finance charge under subparagraph (C) of 14 paragraph (1), charge, receive, or collect on the date of 15 the contract an administrative finance charge not to 16 exceed seventy-five dollars (\$75), provided that the sum of the administrative finance charge and the portion of 18 the finance charge determined by the simple-interest basis shall not exceed the maximum total finance charge permitted by subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1). Any finance charge administrative which is received, or collected by a holder shall be deemed a finance charge earned on the date of the contract.
- (4) When a contract provides for unequal or irregular 25 payments, or payments on other than a monthly basis, the maximum finance charge shall be at the effective rate provided for in paragraph (1), having due regard for the schedule of installments.
- provide that (k) The contract may installment in default for a period of not less than 10 days 30 the buyer shall pay a delinquency charge in an amount not to exceed in the aggregate 5 percent of the delinquent installment, which amount may be collected only once on any installment regardless of the period during which it remains in default. Payments timely received by the 36 seller under an extension or deferral agreement shall not be subject to a delinquency charge unless the charge is permitted by Section 2982.3. The contract may provide for reasonable collection costs and fees in the event of delinquency.

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(1) Notwithstanding any provision of a contract to the contrary, the buyer may pay at any time before maturity entire indebtedness evidenced by the without penalty. In the event of prepayment in full:

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- (1) If the finance charge was determined on the precomputed basis, the amount required to prepay the contract shall be the outstanding contract balance as of that date, provided, however, that the buyer shall be entitled to a refund credit in the amount of the unearned portion of the finance charge, except as provided in paragraphs (3) and (4). The amount of the unearned portion of the finance charge shall be at least as great a 13 proportion of the finance charge, including 14 additional finance charge imposed pursuant to Section 15 2982.8 or other additional charge imposed because the 16 contract has been extended, deferred, or refinanced, as the sum of the periodic monthly time balances payable 18 more than 15 days after the date of prepayment bears to the sum of all the periodic monthly time balances under 20 the schedule of installments in the contract or, if the contract has been extended, deferred, or refinanced, as 22 so extended, deferred, or refinanced. Where the amount of the refund credit is less than one dollar (\$1), no refund credit need be made by the holder. Any refund credit may be made in cash or credited to the outstanding obligations of the buyer under the contract.
- (2) If the finance charge or a portion thereof was 28 determined on the simple-interest basis, the amount required to prepay the contract shall be the outstanding 30 contract balance as of that date, including any earned finance charges which are unpaid as of that date and, if applicable, the amount provided in paragraph (3), and provided further that in cases where a finance charge is 34 determined 360-day basis, on the the payments 35 theretofore received will be assumed to have been 36 received on their respective due dates regardless of the actual dates on which the payments were received.
 - (3) Where the minimum finance charge provided by subparagraph (B) or subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (i), if either is applicable, is greater than

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the earned finance charge as of the date of prepayment, the holder shall be additionally entitled to the difference.

- (4) The provisions of this subdivision shall not impair the right of the seller or the seller's assignee to receive delinquency charges on delinquent installments reasonable costs and fees as provided in subdivision (k) or extension or deferral agreement charges as provided in Section 2982.3.
- (5) Notwithstanding any provision of a contract to the 10 contrary, whenever the indebtedness created by contract is satisfied prior to its maturity through surrender of the motor vehicle, repossession of the motor 13 vehicle, redemption of the motor vehicle 14 repossession, or any judgment, the outstanding obligation of the buyer shall be determined as provided in 16 paragraph (1) or (2); provided further that the buyer's outstanding obligation shall be computed by the holder 18 as of the date the holder recovers the value of the motor 19 vehicle through disposition thereof or judgment 20 entered or, if the holder elects to keep the motor vehicle in satisfaction of the buyer's indebtedness, as of the date the holder takes possession of the motor vehicle.
- (m) Notwithstanding any other provision 24 chapter to the contrary, any information required to be 25 disclosed in a conditional sale contract under this chapter 26 may be disclosed in any manner, method, or terminology required or permitted under Regulation Z, as in effect at the time that disclosure is made, except that permitted by paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 226.18 of 30 Regulation Z, provided that all of the requirements and limitations set forth in subdivision (a) of this section are satisfied. Nothing in this chapter prohibits the disclosure in that contract of additional information required or permitted under Regulation Z, as in effect at the time that disclosure is made.
- 36 (n) If the seller imposes a fee for document 37 preparation, the contract shall contain a disclosure that the fee is not a governmental fee. 38
- 39 (o) No seller may impose an application fee for a transaction governed by this chapter.

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(p) The seller or holder may charge and collect a fee not to exceed fifteen dollars (\$15) for the return by a depository institution of a dishonored check, negotiated order of withdrawal, or share draft issued in connection with the contract, if the contract so provides or if the contract contains a generalized statement that the buyer may be liable for collection costs incurred in connection with the contract.

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- (q) The contract shall disclose on its face, by printing 10 the word "new" or "used" within a box outlined in red, that is not smaller than one-half inch high and one-half inch wide, whether the vehicle is sold as a new vehicle, as defined in Section 430 of the Vehicle Code, or a used vehicle, as defined in Section 665 of the Vehicle Code.
 - (r) The contract shall contain a notice with a heading in at least 12-point bold type and the text in at least 10-point bold type, circumscribed by a line, immediately above the contract signature line, that reads as follows:

THERE IS NO COOLING OFF PERIOD

California law does not provide for a "cooling off" or other Therefore, you cannot cancellation period for vehicle sales. later cancel this contract simply because you change your mind, decide the vehicle costs too much, or wish you had acquired a different vehicle. After you sign below, you may only cancel this contract with the agreement of the seller or for legal cause, such as fraud.

SEC. 2. Section 14602.6 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

14602.6. (a) Whenever a peace officer determines that a person was driving a vehicle while his or her driving privilege was suspended or revoked or without ever having been issued a license, the peace officer may either immediately arrest that person and cause the removal and seizure of that vehicle or, if the vehicle is involved in a traffic collision, cause the removal and seizure of the SB 1325 **— 12 —**

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vehicle, without the necessity of arresting the person in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22650) of Division 11. A vehicle so impounded shall be 4 impounded for 30 days.

The impounding agency, within two working days of 6 impoundment, shall send a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the legal owner of the 8 vehicle, at the address obtained from the department, 9 informing the owner that the vehicle has 10 impounded. Failure to notify the legal owner within two working days shall prohibit the impounding agency from 12 charging for more than 15 days' impoundment when the 13 legal owner redeems the impounded vehicle.

- (b) The registered and legal owner of a vehicle that is 15 removed and seized under subdivision (a) or their agents 16 shall be provided the opportunity for a storage hearing to determine the validity of, or consider any mitigating 18 circumstances attendant to, the storage, in accordance 19 with Section 22852.
- (c) Any period in which a vehicle is subjected to 21 storage under this section shall be included as part of the period of impoundment ordered by the court under subdivision (a) of Section 14602.5.
- (d) (1) An impounding agency shall release a vehicle 25 to the registered owner or his or her agent prior to the end of 30 day's impoundment under any of the following circumstances:
 - (A) When the vehicle is a stolen vehicle.
- (B) When the vehicle is subject to bailment and is 29 unlicensed employee of establishment, including a parking service or 32
- (C) When the license of the driver was suspended or 34 revoked for an offense other than those included in 35 Article 2 (commencing with Section 13200) of Chapter 2 36 of Division 6 or Article 3 (commencing with Section 13350) of Chapter 2 of Division 6. 37
- 38 (2) No vehicle shall be released pursuant to this 39 subdivision, except upon presentation of the registered 40 owner's or agent's currently valid driver's license to

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operate the vehicle and proof of current vehicle registration, or upon order of a court.

(e) The registered owner or his or her agent is responsible for all towing and storage charges related to any administrative impoundment, and authorized under Section 22850.5.

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- (f) A vehicle removed and seized under subdivision (a) shall be released to the legal owner of the vehicle or the legal owner's agent prior to the end of 30 day's 10 impoundment if all of the following conditions are met:
- (1) The legal owner is a motor vehicle dealer, bank, 12 credit union, acceptance corporation, or other licensed 13 financial institution legally operating in this state or is 14 another person, not the registered owner, holding a security interest in the vehicle.
 - (2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent pays all towing and storage fees related to the seizure of the vehicle. No lien sale processing fees shall be charged to the legal owner who redeems the vehicle prior to the fifteenth day of impoundment.
- (3) (A) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent 22 presents foreclosure documents, an affidavit 23 nonmonetary repossession for the vehicle, or an affidavit of repossession for the vehicle.
 - (B) The seizure of a vehicle pursuant to this section is sufficient grounds for the issuance of an affidavit of nonmonetary repossession for the vehicle by the legal owner.
- (g) (1) A legal owner or the legal owner's agent that 30 obtains release of the vehicle pursuant to subdivision (f) shall not release the vehicle to the registered owner of the vehicle or any agents of the registered owner, unless the registered owner is a rental car agency, until after the termination of the 30-day impoundment period.
- (2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent shall not 36 relinquish the vehicle to the registered owner until the registered owner or that owner's agent presents his or her 38 valid driver's license or valid temporary driver's license to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent. The legal owner or the legal owner's agent shall make every

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reasonable effort to ensure that the license presented is valid.

- (3) Prior to relinquishing the vehicle, the legal owner may require the registered owner to pay all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 that were incurred by the legal owner in connection with obtaining custody of the vehicle.
- vehicle removed and seized (h) (1) A under 10 subdivision (a) shall be released to a rental car agency prior to the end of 30 days' impoundment if the agency 12 is either the legal owner or registered owner of the 13 vehicle and the agency pays all towing and storage fees 14 related to the seizure of the vehicle.
- (2) The owner of a rental vehicle that was seized 16 under this section may continue to rent the vehicle upon recovery of the vehicle. However, the rental car agency 18 shall not rent another vehicle to the driver of the vehicle that was seized until 30 days after the date that the vehicle 20 was seized.
- (3) The rental car agency may require the person to 22 whom the vehicle was rented to pay all towing and 23 storage charges related to the impoundment and any 24 administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 25 that were incurred by the rental car agency in connection with obtaining custody of the vehicle.
- (i) Notwithstanding any other provision of 28 section, the registered owner and not the legal owner shall remain responsible for any towing and storage 30 charges related to the impoundment, any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5, parking fines, penalties, and administrative fees incurred by the registered owner.
- 34 SEC. 3. Section 22850.5 of the Vehicle Code is 35 amended to read:
- 22850.5. (a) A city, county, or city and county, or a 37 state agency may adopt a regulation, ordinance, or 38 resolution establishing procedures for the release of properly impounded vehicles and for the imposition of a charge equal to its administrative costs, which shall not

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exceed fifteen dollars (\$15), relating to the removal, impound, storage, or release of the vehicles. Those administrative costs may be waived by the local or state authority upon verifiable proof that the vehicle was 5 reported stolen at the time the vehicle was removed.

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- (b) Administrative costs shall only be imposed on the registered owner or the agents of that owner and shall not include any vehicle towed under an abatement program or sold at a lien sale pursuant to Sections 3068.1 to 3074, 10 inclusive, of, and Section 22851 of, the Civil Code unless the sale is sufficient in amount to pay the lienholder's total charges and proper administrative costs.
- administrative imposed (c) Any costs shall 14 collected by the local or state authority at the time of 15 release.
- 16 (d) The administration charges imposed pursuant to 17 this section shall be in addition to any other charges authorized or imposed pursuant to this code.